

**AS TO BANK ASSESSMENTS.**

**Statement of a Banker in Which is Outlined Objections to Assessments and Equalization by State Tax Commission.**

Editor The Daily Item.

In your paper of the 28th you state that the banks have won the first round in the fight with the tax commission, and you advise that the bankers would not make the mistake of celebrating their victory prematurely, for as certain as anything could be the fight is just beginning, etc. Now Mr. Editor, as a matter of fact, I am not authorized to speak for any of the banks, however, I do not think there will be any celebration among the bankers, but they will feel very thankful to escape even temporarily what they believe to be an unjust taxation. You state that there is an important principle involved in this fight, and a greater general interest has not been evinced in the litigation before, simply because the rank and file of the ordinary tax payers has not been informed concerning the case, its merits, etc. As a matter of fact I would be safe in saying it is the desire of the Sumter banks that the public be informed as far as they are concerned, and the banks feel when the public is informed that a sense of fair dealing and justice will impel it to be on the side of the banks. You state that the tax commission was created to prevent tax dodging by the banks, and the banks are fighting the commission to escape payment of taxes they justly should pay. I would like to know how you arrived at this conclusion. As a matter of fact, the banks in Sumter, formerly paid taxes on a fifty per cent valuation both of their capital and surplus. A few years ago the county board being apprised of this fact, and of the further fact that the balance of the property in the county was assessed at very much lower per cent. decided to reduce the banks' assessment from fifty per cent. to thirty-three and a third on capital and surplus. You state that the real purpose of creating the tax commission was to equalize the assessments of the banks and to require them to pay their just proportion of the taxes. As the act reads: "Be it enacted by the general assembly of the State of South Carolina, that in order to effectively carry into execution the equitable assessment of property for taxation, there is hereby created a commission, etc." Now it seems from that, that the commission was appointed or created for the purpose set forth in the act, and not for the purpose of running down the banks and corporations to assess their property at a much higher per cent. of its value than other property in the State, which being the case, it does not seem to be fair for the tax commission to undertake to increase the valuation of banks and other corporations' property without at the same time increasing all other taxable values in the State in a like manner and proportion. That is common honesty, which every man is entitled to ask for, and has a reason to expect. The constitution of the State provides that all property shall be equitably assessed for taxation, and anything less than this should not be tolerated by the citizens, as a just weight and a fair measure is what every citizen of this State, whether they be identified with corporations or not, is entitled to it. Any act of the legislature that is contrary to the constitution is wrong, yet it should be respected until repealed. I note you say that the public mind is setting toward honest tax returns and fair assessments, etc. Great is the pity that this has not always been the case. By investigation you will find that when the banks of Sumter county are assessed at thirty-three and a third per cent. of their capital and surplus, that they are paying very much higher rate of assessment than is ordinarily collected from the other interests of the county. The bulk of the property in Sumter county aside from that of corporations you will find to be assessed at about 10 to 15 per cent. of its actual value. I am in favor of assessing all property at its actual value and making the rate such that the tax problem will not be unnecessarily burdensome. If you will take the trouble to go over the tax books you will be convinced of the fact that the banks and other corporations in Sumter county, are not the tax dodgers. On the other hand in order to get a concrete case, look at the tax returns for such property, real estate and personal, as you may happen to know about yourself, and tell us whether or not this reform that you refer to, should not be applied all along the line, and to all classes alike, and at the same time? The principle recently enunciated, that banks and other corporations in our State will necessarily be assessed at a higher rate of valuation than other property, is in my humble judgment a spirit of unfair taxation which should be condemned. Our banks ask nothing more and feel that they should be accorded nothing less than justice. Right is right, whether corporations or private parties are con-

cerned, though it may not be popular at all times, it must eventually prevail, or then we have anarchy. Corporations are necessary—let us deal fairly with them, and be honest with ourselves. Do not place an unfair proportion of burdens upon any particular class. Let every man take his share of the load. Let there be no side-stepping, no favoritism, no politics, and we will surely be blessed with an improvement not only in the tax conditions of our State, but in the general moral uplift. And in conclusion, the banks cannot act except by those in charge of them, and in charging the banks with tax dodging, you are charging its officers with evading the tax laws, when in fact they have made returns for the banks which they represent, in exact accordance with the rules laid down by the officers in charge of the taxing department, and whilst the system may be wrong, we have followed the law as given to us, and we do not think it right for all other classes of property in our county to be assessed at a rate much below 33 1-3 per cent. while banks and other corporation property is being assessed at 50 per cent. It was of the inequality and discrimination that the banks complained.

C. G. Rowland,  
President National Bank of South Carolina,  
Sumter, S. C., July 31.

The brief of J. Fraser Lyon, Esq., who was employed by the tax commission as special counsel to represent it in the litigation started by the banks, furnished the facts and comparative statistics upon which we based the article to which Mr. Rowland objects. The facts set forth in this brief seemed to us to be conclusive proof of the need of a re-assessment of the banks, since the most glaring inequalities in assessments between banks of one county and banks of other counties were shown to exist, to say nothing of the inequalities between other classes of property. We reproduce herewith a part of Mr. Lyon's brief, as the most convincing answer possible to this phase of Mr. Rowland's article, the brief dealing with concrete and well established facts only.

Insofar as the general practice of tax dodging is concerned, we wish to say here that we decline to be placed in the attitude of a defender of this species of law breaking. We have never championed individual tax dodging and did not do so in the editorial which serves as a text for Mr. Rowland. We are against all tax dodgers, both personal and corporate, and the purpose of the article was to protest against the methods adopted by some of the banks to block the work of the tax commission. If the tax commission of the State is ever to be reformed and all property assessed on the same basis a start must be made somewhere. The banks, among which it has been shown the grossest inequality of assessment exists, seemed a good place to start. There is no reason nor justice in a bank in one county paying on a 20 per cent. assessment and a bank in another county paying on a 60 per cent. assessment. It would seem that even the banks would welcome instead of fighting the efforts of the tax commission to put all the banks on the same footing.

**Some Facts in Bank Controversy.**

Mr. Lyon's brief analyzes the present assessments of bank property and sets out alleged inequalities, in part as follows:

For further defense to the alleged cause of action, and for cause why an injunction should not issue herein, these defendants respectfully show to the court:

The basis of taxation as it appears on the face of the returns for bank stocks in Pickens county for the year 1914 is 60 per cent of the value of the stock, but an examination into the facts shows that the assessment in fact ranges from 20 per cent. of the real value of the stock to 60 per cent. thereof. To illustrate:

The Bank of Central has a paid capital of \$15,000; it has neither surplus nor undivided profits; it is assessed for taxation at \$9,000. The Pickens bank has \$20,500 paid capital and is assessed on a 60 per cent. basis on this amount, \$12,300; but the Pickens bank has a surplus fund of \$29,500, undivided profits \$11,177, making in all \$64,177. In ascertaining the value of stock, it is manifest that the stock in the Pickens bank is more valuable than that of the Bank of Central, because of the large surplus, etc., yet the stock in each bank has been assessed as being of equal value, whereas the Pickens bank stock is practically four times as valuable as the stock in the Bank of Central. The actual result is that the stock of the Bank of Central is assessed at 60 per cent. of its value, or \$600 on each \$1,000 of value, while the stock of the Pickens bank is assessed at 20 per cent. of its value, or \$200 on each \$1,000 of value. The above are the extremes of inequality, in Pickens county; but an examination of all assessments therein will show other

**glaring inequalities.**

The stock of the Citizens' National bank of Anderson for the year 1914 was assessed at \$85,000; its capital, surplus and undivided profits was \$170,000, making stock assessments 50 per cent. of its value. The practical result is that the stock of this national bank in Anderson was taxed 350 per cent. higher than the stock of the Pickens bank.

The stock of the Bank of Camden was assessed upon the value of the capital stock, undivided profits and surplus, at the rate of 43 1-4 per cent. and upon similar items the Bank of Kershaw was assessed at the rate of 57.4 per cent. of the value thereof; in other words, the stock of the Bank of Camden is assessed at \$141.51 per \$1,000 less than that of the Bank of Kershaw, or a difference of more than 33 per cent. between the two banks.

In Marlboro county the Bank of Marlboro, according to its items, has capital stock, surplus and undivided profits amounting to \$191,980. The shares of this bank are assessed at \$53,730, or on a basis of 28 per cent. of the actual value thereof; but if the sworn statement of this bank, December 31, 1914, to the bank examiner is correct, there should be added to the undivided profits \$69,596 in addition to the amount stated in the tax return, for the amount of undivided profits is stated in said report of the bank examiner as being \$152,986. If the addition, as above explained, is made, the total valuation is \$261,513. Taking this as the basis—and we know of no fact which would modify it—the stock of this bank was taxed on an assessment of 20.54 per cent. of its actual value, and, eliminating the unreturned item of \$69,596 and following the same rule of assessment, the stock of Bank of Marlboro was taxed at 28 per cent. of its value for the year 1914, and the Union Savings Trust Co., was assessed by the county board of Marlboro at 59.5 per cent. of its actual stock value. For the year 1914, \$1,000 of the stock value in the Bank of Marlboro was assessed for taxation at \$280, while \$1,000 of the stock value of the Union Savings Trust Co., was assessed for taxation at \$595. The two last mentioned banks are located in the town of Bennettsville.

Many other inequalities could be mentioned among banks for a given county, but is not thought to be necessary.

The stock of the First National bank of York is assessed at 35 per cent. of its actual value, or \$350 on each \$1,000 of stock value.

The stock of the First National bank of Camden is assessed at 50 per cent. of its actual value, or \$500 on each \$1,000 of stock value.

The stock of the National Loan and Exchange bank of Greenwood is assessed 40 per cent. of its actual value of \$400 on each \$1,000 of stock value.

In Edgefield county the average assessment on bank stock is 60 43-100 per cent. or each \$1,000 of stock is assessed at \$604.40.

In Pickens county the average assessment on bank stock is 39 43-100 per cent. or the stock value of each \$1,000 is assessed at \$394.30.

In York county the average assessment on bank stock is 35 per cent. or \$1,000 of stock value is assessed at \$350.

In Greenwood county the average assessment of bank stock is 40 per cent., or each \$1,000 of stock value is assessed at \$400.

In Chester county the average assessment of bank stock is 36 43-100 per cent., or each \$1,000 of stock is assessed \$364.30.

In Cherokee county the average assessment of bank stock is 40 16-100 per cent., or each \$1,000 of stock value is assessed at \$401.60.

In Chesterfield county the average assessment of bank stock is 46 85-100 per cent. or each \$1,000 of stock value is assessed at \$468.30.

In Anderson county the average assessment of bank stock is 50 per cent. or each \$1,000 of stock value is assessed \$500.

In Marlboro county the average assessment of bank stock is 41 15-100 per cent., or each \$1,000 of stock value is assessed \$411.50.

In Greenville county the average bank stock is assessed 44 84-100 per cent., or each \$1,000 of stock value is assessed \$448.40.

In Spartanburg county the average bank stock is assessed 45 per cent., or each \$1,000 of stock value is assessed at \$450.

In Barnwell county the average bank stock is assessed 60 81-100 per cent., or each \$1,000 of stock value is assessed \$608.10.

In Sumter county the average bank stock is assessed 33 1-10 per cent., or each \$1,000 of stock value is assessed \$331.

In Hampton county the average assessment of bank stock is 60 per cent., or each \$1,000 of stock value is assessed \$600.

The counties of Abbeville, Aiken, Anderson, Bamberg, Clarendon, Laurens, Lee, Lexington, Oconee, Richland and Charleston are assessed upon a 50 per cent. basis or \$1,000 of stock value based on capital, surplus and undivided profits is assessed for

**taxation in full of said counties.**

It is not attempted herein to give the facts in regard to all of the inequalities and discrepancies that exist in regard to the various bank stock within the State. The foregoing are only a few of the inequalities either now or heretofore existing among some of the bank stocks within several of the counties named and between some of the bank stocks of different counties, and some of the bank stocks of a given county in the aggregate with those of another given county in the aggregate and referred to for the purpose of showing the desirability of putting all such stocks on terms of equality as nearly as can be.

Having this end in view, this commission intends to find the average rate or percentage of assessment of all bank stocks of the whole state for the year 1914, and apply that average rate or percentage to the value of the bank stocks of the whole State, for the purpose of obtaining equalization of assessment as to all such property for the year 1915. The rate, basis or percentage of assessment for the year 1914 will be taken for the reason that this commission does not desire to disturb such equality or parity as may have been heretofore, or as may now exist among bank stocks on the one hand, with property of textile and other industrial or public service corporations, money, capital, real and personal property generally, on the other hand.

And your defendants, South Carolina tax commission, aver that it is now and always has been their purpose and intention to proceed in equalizing the assessment of bank stocks and other money capital in the manner equality or parity of assessment may be obtained among bank stock and other money capital, and at the same time the equality or parity heretofore or now existing between such property and other different kind and classes of property in the State may not be disturbed, and that all property be taxed on the same basis.

Your defendants further aver that it is their purpose and intention to inquire into and ascertain, so far as possible, whether the various banks have furnished full and adequate information upon which to base an ascertainment of the value of taxation of the shares of the bank, and that if it should be found that any of the said banks have through fraud, excusable neglect or otherwise failed to render an account of all matters and things that will go toward determining its stock value, then, and in such event, it is the purpose of respondent commission to take into consideration such omitted facts and things in the ascertainment of the true value of such stock.

**An Eye-opener to the Old Boys, Who Wore the Grey.**

Hello, Mr. Editor, my compliments please. I pause for a moment to remove the cobwebs and dust, from my mental vision, that I may hark back to years that have passed into oblivion, from the year 1861 to 1865 in part. To you old boys, remember this, we fought fair, we did not take any undue methods against our foe. I remember well that our battle lines had gotten quite thin, our resources were insufficient to stand the jolts of a resourceful foe; we stopped the fight, and the end came. And not without honor. We fought for an undying principle, believing that we were right. "Old Time" has blended the nation together that was separated for four years. We are now resting securely under the folds of "Old Glory" basking in the sunshine of peace; in this our favored Dixie land.

The old soldier is passing away one by one, it won't be long, before time will be with us no more, ticking the seconds of our lives.

Once upon a time a tender-foot journeyed into the South on a hunting expedition. He lost his way in the back woods. Presently he came upon a cabin. In front of the cabin sat an old man. The tender-foot said: "Hello!" The old man said "Hello." The tender-foot said: "Have you lived here all your life?" The old man replied, "Not yet."

Those of us who are lingering on the shores of time, using the old man's reply, to the tender-foot, that we have not lived all of our lives here yet. Thanks be unto the great God of the universe, who holds the destiny of man in the hollow of his hand. Now veterans of the "lost cause," although battle scarred, maimed, and withered, be still. Comrades, what I want to impress on your mind is this, that it is only when the soul is withered or crippled, that things are truly bad. But if the soul is not involved, remember this, beyond the graveyard, is your "Father's House," with many mansions. The Prince of Peace impressed it upon a dying world, when he was on earth in the flesh. If we do not realize the eternal fitness of things, get right old boys, and in the sweet bye and bye, then we will understand. Old Rock.

**Marriage License Record.**

A license to marry has been issued to W. C. Scarborough and Miss Maud L. Ross of Sumter.

**KILLS WHEAT PESTS.**

**Insects Likely to Damage Stored Wheat Unless Precautionary Measures are Taken.**

Clemson College, Aug. 2.—The entomology division of Clemson College is receiving from farmers many complaints about insects in stored wheat and issues a statement to the effect that insects will seriously reduce the value of the grain unless steps are taken at once to control the pests. The most effective method is by fumigating with carbon bisulfide.

Several kinds of insects attack stored wheat, feeding principally on the starchy material in the grains. These insects destroy the germinating power of the seed, rendering it useless for planting. Even more serious is the injury they do by rendering the wheat inferior for milling purposes. Flour from insect-infested wheat is of a poor quality, containing a lot of the little brown remnants of the insect's work. Worst of all, the pests form webs in the grain which clog up in the milling machinery when the grain is ground.

To control stored wheat insects, use carbon bisulfide, which is an almost colorless liquid, and non-poisonous. It kills by suffocation. Some people store wheat in barrels and others in bins, the usual size of the bins being about 100 bushels. For an ordinary barrel holding about three bushels, use carbon bisulfide at the rate of one-half teacupful to one barrel. For a 100-bushel bin, use 8 pounds or about one gallon.

Apply the carbon bisulfide by sprinkling it over the surface of the grain in the barrel or bin. After sprinkling, cover the top of the barrel or bin with heavy burlap or other like material to hold the fumes in. Leave this cover on for twenty-four hours or longer. Repeat this treatment after ten days or two weeks to destroy the young that hatch from eggs after the first treatment.

In the late summer or early fall, examine the grain to see that no reinfestation has occurred. If the insects are present again, carbon bisulfide must again be used.

Carbon bisulfide is highly inflammable and fire of all sorts must be kept away from it. It is dangerous even for a man who is smoking to go near a wheat bin in which the material has been sprinkled. Be sure to keep every form of fire away from the barrels or bins and from the vessel which holds the carbon bisulfide.

Carbon bisulfide can be bought in 50-pound and 100-pound drums for about 9 cents per pound, at an address which will be given by the Entomology Division, Clemson College. Drums must be stored in a cool place, away from every possible source of fire.

**DEATH DEALING STORM.**

**Violent Storm Sweeps Across Country From Oregon to North Carolina.**

New York, August 4.—A succession of violent storms and cloudbursts, stretching from Portland, Oregon to the North Carolina coast resulted in the loss of possibly seventy-five lives and a damage of millions. The greatest disaster was at Erie, Pa., where a cloudburst swept away many buildings and destroyed railroad traffic for 12 hours. Two lives were lost on the New Jersey coast. The crop damage was enormous in the central West. Many small vessels were sunk between Massachusetts and Cape Hatteras, while millions of damage was done at Richmond, Va.

**Seventy-Five Dead.**

Erie, August 4.—At 11 o'clock this morning Coroner Handley estimated that seventy-five were dead as the result of the flood and the list may possibly reach one hundred. Eighteen bodies have been recovered. The National Guard and naval militia are patrolling the flood district. No disorder has occurred.

**THREE DIE IN EXPLOSION.**

**Experiment at Government Arsenal Proves Fatal.**

Philadelphia, Aug. 3.—Two soldiers and a civilian were killed at the United States arsenal at Frankfort, this city, today in an explosion of time fuses used on shrapnel shells. Another civilian was injured. The dead are:

Arthur B. Rundlett, first class private, ordnance department; home Boston. Prasileo Frasco, second class private, ordnance department; home Trinity; James F. Harkins, civilian, Philadelphia. The men were working on the firing range some distance from the main arsenal buildings. They were unpacking fuses withdrawn from service and sent to the arsenal to be broken up, when one of the boxes exploded.

The cause of the accident has not yet been ascertained by the arsenal officers. Arthur E. Brown, the injured civilian, the officers said, may be able to explain the cause. He was not in condition today to be questioned.

**SPECIAL RATES TO CLEMSON.**

**All Railroads Will Give Reduced Rates to Those Attending Summer School.**

Clemson College, Aug. 3.—The railroads have agreed to give special rates from points in South Carolina to Clemson College to those who are intending to attend the summer school to be held at Clemson, August 9 to September 4. Persons who are coming to the college to attend the summer school should ask for these rates when buying their tickets. The tickets will be on sale August 7, 8, and 9, and will be good on trains leaving on those days. The return tickets will not expire until September 6.

The prospects are for a large enrollment in the four summer school courses that Clemson College is offering. These courses are for farmers, rural school teachers, rural ministers and corn club members.

**BOY PAINFULLY WOUNDED.**

**Pleas in Vain for Older Lad Not to Shoot Him.**

Columbia, Aug. 2.—Refusing, it is said, to listen to his victim's plea not to injure him, Keith Wallace, a white youth, aged 18, this morning at 7 o'clock is alleged to have fired a load of small shot from a shotgun into the right shoulder of Raymond Cooper, a white lad, aged 12, as they and a crowd of other boys were assembled at the corner of Ashley avenue and 9th street in Olympia village. Cooper was taken to a local hospital. The boy's attending physician, Dr. W. A. Boyd, stated this afternoon that while Cooper was painfully hurt, he did not think he was seriously injured, although this could not be correctly ascertained until the youth was operated on. Wallace and Earle Coon, from whom Wallace got the shotgun, were placed under arrest by Officer Lewis Knox.

**BEAVERS IS REDUCED.**

**Atlanta Police Chief Disciplined by Commissioners.**

Atlanta, Ga., Aug. 3.—James L. Beavers, chief of the Atlanta police department, was found guilty of insubordination and reduced to the rank of captain by the board of police commissioners late today. It was announced that the charge of inefficiency, also brought against the police head, had not been sustained.

Disregard of the board's instructions and failure to suppress crime were alleged against Beavers. He had been head of the police department since 1911 and attracted wide attention in 1912 when he abolished Atlanta's segregated vice district and establish "vice squads" to patrol the city.

After Beavers had been deposed, W. M. Mayo, a captain, was elected to succeed him.

Beavers announced late tonight that he would submit a formal refusal of the captaincy to the police board tomorrow, but would not indicate what, if any, other action would be taken.

**LOSES LIFE IN PIPE.**

**Iron Door Closes With Diver Below.**

Pittsburgh, Aug. 2.—Hundreds of persons crowded Highland park today while a force of policemen, firemen and water bureau employes worked frantically to save Charles Carpenter, a diver, who was lost in a 51-inch pipe connecting two reservoirs in the park. Carpenter had entered the main just before noon to remove an obstruction and was effectively imprisoned when a cable snapped and the heavy iron door, deep in the water, dropped behind him. Nothing was thought of his absence for an hour, but when he did not respond to signals another diver went down and found door closed. The air hose seemed to be intact, and the pumps were kept going while other divers worked to open the door and still others sought for the second entrance to the pipe. Just before 5 o'clock the door was lifted and Carpenter's body was located. He had been dead only a few minutes. His mother and sister were in the crowd which waited all afternoon for news from the main.

**Wreck Store in Bankruptcy.**

An involuntary petition in bankruptcy was filed in the United States District court here yesterday against Sam Myerson, Joe Wynne and William Berg, copartners as Consolidated Mercantile Company, of Sumter. Attached to the petition is a statement by the defendants admitting the insolvency of the company and consenting to be adjudged bankrupt. Respective claims of \$191.51; \$75, and \$422.56 were filed against the defendant company.—News and Courier.

Several towns in South Carolina have adopted a rule requiring all washwomen to register with the health department. This is a wise precaution to safeguard the health of a community against contagious diseases.